Political situation in Middle East

1064. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the political situation in Middle East has become more fragile due to recent Israel attack on Lebanon;

(b) if so, whether Government have issued necessary advisory to Indians living in Middle East;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Israel attack is disproportionate to the action taken by militants; and

(e) if so, the significant role India wish to play to defuse tension in the Middle East?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes.

(b) and (c) On 17th July, 2006, the Government had put out an Advisory, asking all Indians in Lebanon, especially those in Southern Lebanon, to take suitable precautions regarding their personal safety. All Indian nationals were advised to remain in contact with the Indian Embassy in Beirut, which would render them necessary advice and updated information on the evolving situation. All Indian nationals were also advised to keep their travel documents ready in all respects and to seek the assistance of the Embassy in this regard if necessary. Further those Indian nationals who were desirous of leaving Lebanon and were able to cross over into Syria were advised to contact the Indian Embassy in Syria for advice and assistance. Subsequently, once the arrangements for evacuation of Indians by Indian Naval ships to Cyprus and from there to India by air were put in place, Indian nationals were facilitated by the Embassies in Lebanon and Cyprus to leave for India.

(d) Yes. India has already condemned this as disproportionate use of force by Israel.

(e) West Asia is our extended neighbourhood and developments in that region have a direct impact on our security and our vital interests. India has been engaged in diplomatic efforts to ensure that there should be a peaceful, comprehensive, negotiated long-term solution that involves and addresses the legitimate concerns of all parties in the region.